

SERVICE DRESS PROTOTYPES PIQUE INTEREST

WASHINGTON — The Air Force Uniform Board is reviewing several concepts that Airmen have suggested regarding the appearance of the service dress uniform.

Some of the informal feedback about the current service dress includes Airmen wanting to revamp the service dress to look more military, like the other services. Other comments have suggested that the uniform needs to reflect the Air Force's history more. The Air Force began exploring these ideas by producing several prototypes that reflect a combination of ideas that have been gleaned from comments, suggestions and informal surveys conducted over the past several years.

"What we consistently have heard from many Airmen is a desire for a more 'military,' and less 'corporate' look and feel, something more reflective of the Air Force's heritage, and its role as a professional military organization," said Brig. Gen. Robert Allardice, director of Airman development and sustainment, deputy chief of

staff for manpower and personnel. "Initial prototypes are direct descendants of our heritage, rooted in Hap Arnold and Billy Mitchell's Air Force," General Allardice said.

Another survey will provide a formal opportunity to collect feedback on whether or not Airmen want a new service dress, and if so, what changes, likes, or dislikes they have about the prototypes.

"We see this as an opportunity to reflect on our rich history, as well as the image we wish to portray in uniform," General Allardice said.

This process will use the standard Air Force Uniform Board process and as with the Airman's Battle Uniform, Airmen are encouraged to take the opportunity to directly contribute to how their new service uniform might look. The Air Force will present options based on feedback received on possible service dress designs through the uniform board process.

Officer educational records unmasked

WASHINGTON — Air Force leaders announced April 13 that promotion boards will once again consider officers' educational progress as they advance in rank.

In a joint letter released from Secretary of the Air Force Michael W. Wynne and Air Force Chief of Staff T. Michael Moseley, they state, "Our expeditionary Air Force will need all the cultural, political and technical skills available."

Including an officer's educational level reverses a decision the Air Force

made a few years ago. Educational records were masked because some Airmen were using their benefits to pursue degrees not relevant to Air Force duties, they said.

"Over time, earning a post-graduate degree deteriorated into a method to increase the likelihood of promotion," the letter reads.

The decision to unmask the educational records comes from an unforeseen adverse effect from the previous masking decision.

"Unfortunately, many others stopped pursuing degrees that would have benefited themselves and the Air Force. Also, boards were unable to see which Airmen were meeting their full potential," they said.

"Both of us want to encourage Airmen, not discourage them, from pursuing advanced education," the letter reads. "There are several avenues to obtain degrees, and the Air Force is developing others. Our nation needs our best and demands nothing less."

International affairs career field opens for civilians

WASHINGTON — Air Force officials began implementing the international affairs career field this spring. Through this career field, Air Force civilians are given additional opportunities to develop skills and experiences equal to their military counterparts.

"IACF is a key element in deliberately developing our (international affairs) professionals and increasing both the efficiency and effectiveness of our already highly skilled team," said Bruce Lemkin, deputy under secretary of the Air Force for international affairs. "We must transform our existing civilian professional development programs to prepare our personnel for future success."

In 2004, the Air Force replaced career programs with

career fields to provide a more structured framework for civilian workforce development. Every civilian position in the Air Force belongs to a functional community and associated career field. Today, there are 21 active career fields, with four more under development.

"When IACF reaches full operational capability in October 2007, it will ensure our ability to recruit, educate, train and retain a superior team capable of meeting the challenges of the dynamic global security environment," Mr. Lemkin said.

Representatives from the IACF development team will tour bases this year to give an IACF information briefing. For more information about IACF visit the Web site at <http://www.iaprograms.com>.

Airman Battle Uniform ready for production

WASHINGTON — The new Airman Battle Uniform is ready for production and will be available in fiscal 2007.

"We were looking for a uniform that would be easier to maintain," said Brig. Gen. Robert R. Allardice, the Air Force deputy chief of staff of personnel. "We wanted to provide a uniform that the Airman wouldn't need to spend a lot of out-of-pocket expenses to maintain."

Also, Airmen's feedback throughout the process was beneficial in adding new pockets on the uniform.

"It will have the four pockets on the front of the shirt, and also a small pencil pocket on the left forearm and two

pockets on the lower legs. In addition, inside the side pockets and inside of the breast pockets there will be smaller sewn-in pockets to hold small tools, flashlights or cell phones," the general said.

The new uniform design is a pixelated tiger stripe with four soft earth tones consisting of tan, grey, green and blue. The ABU will have a permanent crease and will be offered in 50-50 nylon-cotton blend permanent press fabric eliminating the need for winter and summer weight uniforms.

"We want a uniform that you wash, pull it out of the dryer, and wear it. This

requirement meets the ease and cost effectiveness needs in maintaining a uniform," he said.

In the long run it will save Airmen money on dry cleaning costs.

"This is the uniform of the future," General Allardice said. "Eventually when enough of these uniforms are manufactured, we will phase out the BDU and desert combat uniforms."

The current projected mandatory wear date for the new ABU is fiscal 2011.

For more information on ABU accessory items, check out <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?storyID=123017545>.

Headquarters badge recognizes Pentagon assignment

WASHINGTON — Members assigned to Headquarters Air Force staff here will soon have the option to wear a new badge.

The basis for the Headquarters Air Force badge is Air Force heritage and the design incorporates many elements from the Department of the Air Force Seal.

The predominant colors of the badge are ultramarine blue and gold, the colors of the Air Force through transition from the Army Air Corps. At the center of the badge is an American bald eagle, a symbol of the United States and air power. The eagle is holding an olive branch and a bundle of 13 arrows, denoting the power

of peace and war -- the heart of the Air Force mission. The Air Force shield is at the core of the eagle.

A wreath, an ancient symbol of victory, encircles the badge and meets the old Army Air Corps symbol. The eagle holds a streamer with the Latin motto "E pluribus unum" that means "Out of many, one" and represents the original 13 colonies forming into one nation.

Airmen currently assigned to Headquarters Air Force or who have been assigned to a qualifying position for at least 365 consecutive days are entitled to wear the badge. Wear of the badge is optional.

OFFICIALS MANDATE VIRTUAL OUT-PROCESSING

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas — All Airmen undergoing permanent change of station moves, retirements or separations are now required to use the virtual Out-Processing application available through the virtual Military Personnel Flight.

Airmen can enter the vMPF by logging onto the Air Force Personnel

Center's secure Web site where they can view their vOP checklist from the individual actions menu.

The vOP checklist will include requirements based on the Airman's unit and other associated base agencies, such as the transportation management office, finance, medical clinic and Tricare. The checklist

will also include the timeframe required for clearing actions at each location.

The online process will also eliminate paper checklists and most in-person out-processing requirements. For more information, Airmen should contact their base military personnel flight.